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CATE FAEHRMANN

NSW GREENS MP

THE
GREENS

15 April 2020

The Hon. Andrew Constance

Minister for Transport

Via email

Dear Minister

The current COVID-19 pandemic is presenting unique challenges for the people of NSW. I recognise how difficult this time is for the government and commend the work that is being done to flatten the curve and keep our communities safe and healthy.

I'm reaching out to you in this challenging time with a recommendation to reallocate road space to active transport to assist people in taking appropriate physical distancing measures as they exercise and undertake essential journeys.

Many essential workers, especially those in the health sector, are choosing to travel by bike or by walking in order to reduce their risk of infection by COVID-19. This 'mode shift' helps decongest public transport and contributes to the safety of people who have no other alternative. However, it needs your support to keep people safe.

Unfortunately NSW does not have a well-connected network of safe cycling infrastructure. During this time of physical distancing people should not have to choose between personal safety and infection control. A number of countries such as New Zealand and Denmark have reconfigured some road space to create temporary bike lanes and I would urge you to consider doing the same starting with providing safe cycling routes to hospitals and key health precincts.

Footpaths in NSW are often narrow, with a minimum width of 1.2m. This will now force pedestrians to choose between staying safely on the footpath and complying with COVID-19 physical distancing requirements when exercising or leaving their homes for essential journeys.

The closure of all gyms, swimming pools, many beaches and some walking tracks has forced more people onto footpaths for physical activity. This means that pedestrians often fill bike paths and spill onto the roads to try to comply with physical distancing

requirements. Temporarily reallocating some road space would assist in improving community safety as people go about their essential travel or exercise.

Some parks, such as Sydney's Centennial Park, trialled 'car free days' over Easter, reducing the potential for dangerous interactions between cars, bike riders and pedestrians. I encourage Transport for NSW to work with local government and other relevant stakeholders including the community to develop travel and open space plans, especially in densely populated areas, to support people to travel safely, exercise and stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for giving this issue your consideration at this time and I look forward to your response.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cate Faehrmann', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cate Faehrmann MLC

NSW Greens Active Transport spokesperson